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6 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Participation in East Asia Research Colloquium,
The George Washington University

1. On 4 April 1977, I discussed the topic of "Tachai," the model agricultural production brigade in China, before the East Asia Research Colloquium of the Institute of Sino-Soviet Studies. My participation was at the request of Professor Franz Michael, and the invitation was tendered because of my association with the Institute over a number of years as a part-time lecturer. About 25 people attended, including most of the faculty at the Institute, graduate students, several people from other universities, notably Michael Lindsay, American University, (who had been in North China during the 1940s and visited Tachai in 1973) and several from government agencies.

2. My presentation included a 45 minute discussion of the main characteristics of the Tachai production brigade, the progress of the current campaign in establish Tachai-type production units in other areas of China, an assessment of the problems inherent in a Tachai-type production system, and the relationship of the program to national goals for agricultural production and modernization. Slides, taken from Chinese periodicals, plus hand-out charts and a map supplemented the discussion. A lengthy question-and-answer period followed for the remainder of the 2-hour session.

3. Judging from the number and variety of questions and from the comments made to me by staff members of the Institute, the session was successful. The political, economic, and institutional implications of the Tachai campaign are significant in the future development and directions of the China internal

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scene and the questions and comments ranged widely. The research done on the project will not be "lost" since much of it will be used in preparation for my contribution to the forthcoming NIO sponsored China conference late in April. In addition, the use of classified material with the open sources previously exploited may make feasible another (and classified) paper or briefing on Tachai that would focus more on the problems and difficulties that the Chinese leadership faces in attempting to again speed up the pace of modernization and to spur agricultural production. An incidental observation is that my participation at the colloquium (as a geographer) and my discussion of problem involving assessments of a variety of political and economic factors raised no "turf" questions among the assembled historians, political scientists, and economists -- a pleasant situation and environment that unfortunately is not always present in the bureaucratic structure termed the DDI.

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